

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sept.. 30, 2005**

**For More Information Contact**

CDC Press Office (404) 639-3286

D.C. Health Department, Leila Abrar (202) 841-9232

Maryland Department of Health, Karen Black (804) 471-0842

VDH Press Pager (877) 573-9504

**ROUTINE AIR SAMPLER DETECTION SYSTEM IN WASHINGTON,  
D.C. INDICATES RESULTS FROM POSSIBLE DISEASE AGENT**  
*Sept. 24 Test Results Indicate Tularemia Bacteria*

(RICHMOND, Va)—The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notified the states of Maryland and Virginia and the District of Columbia today that an airborne form of Tularemia bacterium was detected by air sensors in the vicinity of the National Capital Mall during the weekend of Sept. 24 - 25. Since then, additional tests from these collectors have all been negative.

Subsequent laboratory tests performed on the Sept. 24-25 samples have supported the presence of low levels of the bacterium in the environment. Public health officials do not believe the finding of low levels of the bacterium near the National Mall indicate a public health threat.

Tularemia, which occurs naturally, is easily treated with common antibiotics. It cannot be transmitted from person to person. Tularemia is found naturally in the environment, and health officials are doing additional environmental sampling as well as reviewing other possible causes of the positive reading.

State health departments have alerted local health departments, acute care treatment facilities, health care providers and veterinarians to be on the alert for signs of respiratory infections related to Tularemia. Also as a precaution, CDC and public health officials are alerting the medical community to be on the lookout for possible cases of Tularemia. To date, no cases of Tularemia have been discovered or reported.

As a precautionary measure, CDC and public health officials are recommending that anyone who visited areas around the National Mall between 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 24 and 10 a.m. Sunday, Sept. 25 should see a health care provider if they experience symptoms related to Tularemia, which include:

- Sudden fever
- Chills
- Headaches
- Muscle aches
- Joint pain
- Dry cough
- Conjunctivitis
- Pneumonia

People who do not have symptoms of Tularemia do not need to seek out medical attention.

The Centers for Disease Control is the lead agency investigating this incident. Information about Tularemia is available from the CDC at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) [http://www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov). Similar information is available on the Virginia Department of Health Web site at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov).